

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 032104Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6998

INFO AMEMBASSY BRAZILIA

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 00906

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, BL, PE, CI

SUBJECT: CHILE-BOLIVIA-PERU RELATIONS: BOLIVIAN OUTLET TO SEA

REFS: A. SANTIAGO 692; B. LIMA 896; C. LIMA 980; D. LIMA 981

1. PERUVIAN NOTE OF JANUARY 29 (REF D) HAS BEEN COLDLY RECEIVED IN CHILEAN FONOFF, WHERE IT IS VIEWED AS RATHER OBSTRUCTIVE, CERTAIN TO DELAY MATTERS, AND POSSIBLY A PRELUDE TO AN ULTIMATE REQUEST FOR ARBITRATION BY US PRESIDENT PURSUANT TO PROTOCOL ACCOMPANYING 1929 TREATY.

2. FOREGOING REACTION WAS CLEAR IN EMBOFF TALKS WITH FONMIN CARVAJAL AND FONMIN DIRECTOR SPECIAL AFFAIRS JORGE BERGUNO.

3. THEY GAINED IMPRESSION FROM PERUVIAN TEXT THAT PERU SOUGHT TO CONDITION ANY FURTHER PROGRESS IN CHILEAN-BOLIVIAN TALKS UPON PREVIOUS NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN CHILE AND PERU, IN WHICH ALL THE DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING PERUVIAN RIGHTS IN THE TACNA-ARICA AREA WOULD HAVE TO BE SETTLED. CHILEANS SAY THEY UNDERSTAND GOP DESIRE THAT ITS RIGHTS BE RESPECTED, BUT BELIEVE THEY ARE CORRECT IN DISCUSSING SPECIFICS OF CORRIDOR ARRANGEMENT WITH BOLIVIA FIRST OF ALL. THRUST OF
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PERUVIAN NOTE IMPLIES TO THEM THAT PERU MAY BE CLEARING WAY

FOR AN APPEAL TO ARBITRATION, WHICH COULD SET BACK SOLUTION OF BOLIVIA'S PROBLEM INDEFINITELY.

4. CARVAJAL AND BERGUNO INDICATED THEY WOULD CARRY ON TALKS WITH PERU, BUT WOULD BE LOATHE TO HOLD UP FURTHER TALKS WITH BOLIVIA. THEY TENDED TO MINIMIZE THE TACNA-ARICA ZONAL PROBLEMS MENTIONED BY PERU, ON THE PREMISE THAT WITH COOPERATION BY ALL SIDES, THESE COULD BE EASILY SETTLED. CARVAJAL ANTICIPATED THIS VIEW WOULD PREDOMINATE WITH GROUP OF CHILEAN EX-FOREIGN MINISTERS AND CONGRESSIONAL EXPERTS TO WHOM PERUVIAN NOTE WOULD BE SUBMITTED FOR STUDY.

5. COMMENT: PERUVIAN NOTE, AND ATTITUDES EXPRESSED BY PERUVIAN AND CHILEAN COMMENTARORS IN REFTELS, APPEAR TO SET STAGE FOR THE KIND OF PROLONGED AND POLITE WRANGLING WE ALL FORESAW WHEN CHILEAN PROPOSAL SURFACED. CHILE'S POSITION IS RELATIVELY GOOD: IT HAS MADE THE GRAND GESTURE, AND IF NOTHING HAPPENS BECAUSE ITS INTERLOCUTORS CANNOT AGREE WITH IT, IT HAS LOST NOTHING. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW SERIOUSLY CHILEANS MAY HAVE CONSIDERED WHAT LIMA DESCRIBES AS THE GEO-POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM. NO DOUBT THEY REALIZE THAT ANY ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD REQUIRE PERU TO CROSS BOLIVIA TO REACH THE TERRITORY IT LOST IN THE WAR OF THE PACIFIC WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR PERU TO ACCEPT; AND, LIKE THE PERUVIANS, THEY MAY HAVE ASSESSED THE POSSIBILITY OF A BRAZILIAN INTEREST IN A BOLIVIAN OUTLET TO THE SEA. IF SO, THEY PROBABLY FEEL THAT BRAZIL'S INFLUENCE, IF ANY, IS MORE LIKELY TO BE FAVORABLE TO CHILE THAN TO PERU.
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